

Pharmacies Needed to Stock THC

Physicians wishing to prescribe delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as an antiemetic agent for cancer chemotherapy patients will soon have a new and streamlined means of obtaining the drug. The National Cancer Institute has announced a distribution plan which will permit registered hospital pharmacies to dispense THC. The NCI program will replace the currently operating state-wide marijuana/THC research program that will cease operation on June 30, 1981.

Here's how the NCI plan will work:

(1) Hospital pharmacies wishing to obtain THC must register with the NCI and the DEA. Registration information may be obtained by writing to:

National Cancer Institute
Investigational Drug Branch
Building 37 Room 6E-28
Bethesda, Maryland 20205

(2) Once a hospital pharmacy has been registered, participating physicians will be required to obtain and complete FDA Form 1573. This brief biographical form will be filed both with the hospital pharmacy and the NCI. The physician will receive the NCI's prescribing guidelines for THC and must agree, by signing the FDA 1573, to abide by them.

(3) Following these registration steps, the process of actually obtaining the drug for a patient will be considerably easier than is presently the case under the state's research project:

(a) The physician and patient will sign a consent form (provided in the guidelines).

(b) The physician will issue a prescription to be filled at the registered hospital pharmacy.

(c) The only data to be reported by physician or patient will be the occurrence of adverse effects (NCI reporting form will be in the guidelines).

The "key" to making the NCI system workable is achieving an adequate state-wide geographic distribution of registered hospital pharmacies stocking the drug. Physicians who wish to have access to THC beyond June 30, 1981, are advised to speak with their hospital pharmacy directors about participating in the NCI program.

Further information concerning the registration process may be obtained by contacting the administrator of the state marijuana/THC program:

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University of Washington
(206) 543-5968 □

WSMA and HCFA Negotiating with Insurance Carriers to Use AMA Uniform Claim Form

The WSMA and the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) Region X are involved in a joint venture to persuade insurance carriers and state government (particularly DSHS) to adopt the AMA Uniform Claim Form. The form is already approved for use by HCFA for Medicare claims.

Adoption of the AMA form by third party payors will mean a reduction in paperwork for physicians' office personnel, and therefore, a saving in time and money.

Dr. Blackburn S. Joslin of Bellevue, representing the WSMA, is chairing the negotiations. Others involved in the discussions include representatives of United Health Care, Blue Cross and Blue Cross-CHAMPUS, King County Medical Blue Shield, Washington Physicians Services, DSHS-Medicaid and Labor and Industries-Industrial Insurance.

Physicians are urged to contact third party payors with whom they work to suggest the AMA form be adopted. □



Clockwise: Dr. Blackburn S. Joslin talks with Bobbie Whitehead of HCFA, Charles Bergeron of King County Medical Blue Shield and Leslie Wall of Washington Physicians Service about use of the AMA Uniform Claim Form.

If you have questions about any WSMA activities, you may use the directory of services on p.3 to direct your inquiry to the proper individual (in Seattle 623-4801; outside Seattle 1-800-552-0612).